

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Science and
Education
Administration

Washington, D.C.
20250

December 8, 1980
No. 11

Changes--Challenges

Since my last letter, November 4 has come and gone and we are now preparing for significant changes in our national leadership. With a new administration, we in SEA will no doubt experience some changes.

I am confident that the central mission of SEA--discovery and development of new knowledge in the food and agricultural sciences, and the dissemination of both new and currently available information so that technology can be transferred into practical use--will not diminish in importance to the nation and the world. I urge you to continue producing the high caliber work and personnel that is so necessary to carry out that broad, vital mission effectively.

Those of us based in Washington have been working with the transition team. In keeping with President Carter's and Secretary Bergland's wishes, we are making every effort to provide the kinds of information and assistance needed for a smooth transition -- which is so important to the integrity of our programs.

Talcott W. Edminster Dies -- A Loss to Agricultural Research

Talcott W. Edminster, former AR administrator and USDA employee for 36 years, died November 14 in College Park, Md. He had retired from SEA at the end of February.

His career was marked by outstanding achievement. He worked his way up from a bench scientist with the Soil Conservation Service to Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service in 1971.

One of his greatest achievements was the successful direction of the reorganization of ARS in 1972, the most extensive organizational change in the history of USDA's agricultural research programs.

His contributions to SEA and the Department will not soon be forgotten.

SEA Meets With Partners to Discuss Budget .

Last month, we met with representatives from the State Agricultural Experiment Stations, Cooperative State Extension and Resident Instruction Committees on Organization and Policy to broaden the basis for cooperation in developing the science and education agenda for 1983 and beyond.

As a result of the Nov. 6 meeting, procedures and schedules are being prepared to incorporate guidance from the states more effectively in SEA's Fiscal Year 1983 budget and to allow for review and discussion of SEA's proposals by our partners at appropriate times.

This group will meet again on Dec. 16 to review science and education programs of emphasis proposed for FY 1983.

We continue to strengthen our State and USDA programs through this type of joint planning.

Meetings With University Groups

I met with a group of deans and presidents of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in Williamsburg, Va., last month to discuss areas of cooperation between SEA and the AASCU institutions.

I encouraged the group to participate in competitive and special grants programs, higher education programs, and proposed revisions in Title V and Title XIV of the Farm Bill. I also asked for their cooperation in the development of budget priorities and strategies to elicit support for budgetary requests.

This month I also had the honor of introducing the first Seaman A. Knapp Memorial Lecturer, Lester Brown, at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges in Atlanta, Ga. This new annual lecture series which pays tribute to the history of the Cooperative Extension Service, gets its name from the father of the cooperative extension concept.

Mr. Brown, president of Worldwatch Institute, a private, non-profit Washington-based international research institute devoted to the analysis of emerging global issues, spoke on "The Role of Land-Grant Institutions in Developing a Sustainable Society."

AR Senior Staff Conference

SEA-AR senior staff met in October at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Md., to discuss how line and staff managers can work together more effectively to execute national research programs.

Terry Kinney, administrator, told the 76 attendees--including national program staff and regional information officers--that the goal of the conference was to develop an understanding of how we assess and build our national research programs, and how we communicate, coordinate and cooperate at all levels within SEA.

Dennis Prager, Office of Science and Technology Policy, painted an optimistic picture for research in the future. Speaking on the topic "Industry- University-Federal Interaction," Dr. Prager said there is a resurgence of interest in research, particularly basic research.

Prager said the challenges facing AR include the need for more skillful management of limited and slowly growing resources and the need for closer cooperation between the various players in the system--producers, consumers, land grant and other universities, federal research and industry.

At a banquet during the conference, I had the pleasure of presenting a plaque to Senator Henry Bellmon, Oklahoma, recognizing his contributions to research, extension, teaching, and many other aspects of agriculture.

A summary of the conference proceedings will be available soon.

National Extension Home Economists Meeting

The National Association of Extension Home Economists 46th Annual Meeting was held in November in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. The theme of the meeting was a forward look at "Shaping the 80's." As I told the group when I met with them, I am confident that Extension home economics will continue to provide new programs, develop new and innovative evaluation systems, and respond to the public policy issues that will confront families in the 80's.

Human Nutrition Workshops

SEA's Human Nutrition unit and the Pennsylvania State University sponsored five workshops to identify priority research issues in nutrition education at the University in August, September, and October. We expect to draw on the workshop findings as we develop a new program in nutrition education research.

The conference brought together experts in nutrition education research in both the public and private sectors from a variety of disciplines. USDA was represented by Secretary Bergland's Office; SEA-Human Nutrition, -Extension, and -Cooperative Research; Food and Nutrition Service; and Land Grant institutions. Other participating Federal agencies included the Department of Education, the Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Technology Transfer

The Technology Transfer Act of 1980 emphasizes the responsibility of Federal research organizations to make scientific findings available to the private sector and to state and local governments, as well as to encourage the transfer and use of such technology. The goal is to enhance productivity in the public and private sectors through research advancements made at Federal laboratories.

A clearinghouse for information on utilization of Federal technology, located in the Department of Commerce, is also authorized by the legislation.

As a result of discussions on the implications for SEA of the Technology Transfer Act, I have established a task force to represent SEA in any Department-wide or interagency discussions on USDA responses to the Act and to take the initiative in proposing SEA actions in response to the legislation. There will most likely be opportunity for Extension to serve as one of the primary technology transfer systems.

Scientists Should Share Findings

SEA scientists should increase their efforts to share research findings with potential users. Under recent changes in the AR Research Grade Evaluation Guide, peer panels will consider such efforts favorably. SEA scientists will receive more information on this shortly.

Attracting Scientists

We have initiated a number of actions to attract and retain high caliber scientists who are so vital to the success of all our agency programs. We have designated a number of AR scientists at major universities to serve as recruiting representatives on campuses and we will be taking other steps to speed up the hiring process

Terry Kinney, Jr., AR administrator, has proposed a plan to provide for more recognition and awards, more advanced education opportunities, a sabbatical leave program, hiring outstanding scientists at a salary above normal entry rate, reducing the administrative load on scientists, and establishing a better work environment. The plan is being finalized and we hope to implement some of it soon.

We are making in-depth occupational studies of disciplines where there is a shortage of scientists with input from other Federal agencies, professional organizations, and private industry.

I am optimistic that these efforts will be successful. Even if we can not work out all of the proposed actions, there will be positive changes in the near future.

New Legislation

October 17, President Carter signed Public Law 96-469, the Animal Cancer Act, promoting basic research in animal cancer at appropriate USDA facilities, or by grants to qualified research institutions. The Act requires that USDA and the National Institutes of Health coordinate the research. The five-year authorization provides for \$25 million to be appropriated for fiscal years 1982 through 1986. It limits the funds that can be obligated for research at USDA facilities to 30 percent of those appropriated in any fiscal year.

October 3, President Carter signed Public Law 96-374, the Education Amendments of 1980. The Act, which amends the Higher Education Act of 1965, gives Land Grant status to the Community College of American Samoa and to the College of Micronesia. It provides a one-time \$3 million endowment in lieu of the proceeds from the sale of land or land script for the endowment and maintenance of the two new Land Grant colleges.

Energy in Agriculture Coordinating Conference

Many departments, agencies, and offices have energy programs related to agriculture. On October 30, the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences held an Energy in Agriculture Coordinating Conference. Energy programs relating to agriculture were described by representatives of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Office of Technology Assessment, USDA agencies including SEA, Department of Energy agencies, Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, and National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges.

Pat Jordan, Director, Colorado State Agricultural Experiment Station and Chairman of the Joint Council's Committee on Energy chaired the meeting. Committee members attending were Al Pettibone, Associate Dean, Resident Instruction, Washington State University; Gale VandeBerg, Director, Wisconsin Extension; Bille Hougart, Acting Assistant Director, SEA-Special Programs; and Robert F. Buckman, Deputy Chief, Forest Service.

Broadly based meetings, such as this, should lead to better planning and program coordination.

Grants Publications

A comprehensive listing of food and agriculture research grants awarded during Fiscal Year 1980 is now available in a SEA brochure.

Entitled "Food and Agriculture Research Grants Fiscal Year 1980," the brochure provides information on the institutions and principal investigators receiving the grants, amount awarded, title of grant, and research period. The various grant programs are also explained.

Another recently published SEA brochure, "Sponsored Programs of the Science and Education Administration," provides information on preparing and submitting grant proposals.

Copies of both publications may be obtained from SEA Publications Requests and Distribution, USDA, Room 6007-S, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Human Nutrition Advisory Committee Meets

The first meeting of the Human Nutrition Advisory Committee, to be held December 8-9, will provide for public participation in the development of policies and programs relating to food regulations, dietary guidance, nutrition status monitoring, food assistance, and human nutrition research and education.

The committee is composed of 20 members appointed by the Secretary for one-year terms. Four members represent each of the following groups: consumers; beneficiaries of food assistance and/or nutrition education programs; State and local food assistance programs and/or educational institutions and agencies; the agricultural industry, including producers, processors and retailers; and scientists in the food and nutrition area.

The committee met to identify priority nutrition problems, review USDA programs and policies in relation to those priorities; and recommend needed programs and policies to meet the nutritional needs of the public.

Advisory Committees Meet

The Animal Health Science Research Advisory Board and the National Plant Genetic Resources Board met in October and provided excellent recommendations for program and budget development. Both groups report to the Secretary.

The Animal Health Science board includes representatives from USDA, the Food and Drug Administration, State agricultural experiment stations and colleges of veterinary medicine, and national livestock commodity organizations. At its meeting, the board discussed the current status of the Animal Health and Disease Research Formula Program, administered by CR. The board also developed priorities for awarding animal health Special Research Grants.

The National Plant Genetic Resources Board, which includes scientists and administrators, discussed program content and administration as well as fund requirements for plant genetic resources, conservation, and use programs. An increased need of 10% to 20% was identified.

Dr. Kinney, Administrator of AR, responded to recommendations by the National Plant Germplasm Committee, and committed AR to increasing the effectiveness of the national germplasm system.

Forum for Animal Agriculture

The Forum for Animal Agriculture, a consortium of about 20 animal industry organizations, met in November to develop plans to follow-up on research priorities which emerged from the Conference on Animal Agriculture in Boyne Falls, Michigan, last spring. Dr. Kinney and I discussed SEA budget procedures with the group and they requested progress reports as we develop our FY 1983 budget.

Publications of Interest

The 1980 report of the National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board to the Secretary of Agriculture is available and includes information we should consider in future planning.

The report includes discussions of general policy issues, a set of prioritized objectives for U.S. agriculture, and a discussion of organization and roles in the agriculture science system. Prioritized recommendations for specific work are also provided.

The Board has requested detailed responses to the report from the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences as well as from the Department.

Copies are available from James Meyers, National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board, Room 351-A, Administration Building, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SEA-AR has developed a publication outlining its mission and goals. It also includes information on AR's special capabilities to accomplish its objectives, and the role of AR in the Nation's food and agricultural system. Copies are available from SEA Publications Requests and Distribution, USDA, Room 6007-S, Washington, D.C. 20250.

A condensed version of SEA's study, Graduates of Higher Education in the Food and Agricultural Sciences, has been prepared for the Agricultural and Natural Resources Resident Instruction Committee on Organization and Policy (RICOP) of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. Copies may be purchased from Allen G. Goecker, Office of Resident Instruction, Agricultural Administration, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, 47907. The cost is 20¢ per copy plus handling and shipping.

Congress Passes USDA Appropriations

As this letter went to press, both the House and Senate had passed a compromise appropriations bill for Agriculture and sent the bill to the President. The President has 10 days to approve or disapprove the bill. Prior to this action, House and Senate Conferees had met and worked out earlier differences in the bills passed in each House.

A summary of SEA funding provisions, from the President's budget request through the Conference action is as follows:

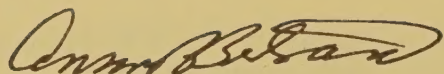
	1980 Appropriation (Adjusted)	1981 Budget	House Bill	Senate Bill	Conference Action
AR	\$345,127	\$368,974	\$365,611	\$391,345	\$384,931
CR	186,031	195,104	175,592	214,514	200,897
EXT	274,023	282,017	287,529	299,428	292,133
TIS	7,917	8,686	8,541	8,541	8,541
HN	25,843	30,849	30,623	28,049	29,436
HE	11,500	---	11,500	11,500	11,500
SEA	850,441	885,630	879,396	953,377	927,438

Highlights of the Conference Action over the amounts made available to SEA in FY 1980 are:

- AR . Provided additional program support for basic research (\$5.8 million); IPM (\$1 million); Cotton Dust (\$.975 million); AGRISTARS (\$.700 million); Germplasm (\$.400 million)
- . Provided \$10.1 million to complete high priority construction at Plum Island.
- . Provided \$2.5 million for energy retrofit of facilities.
- . Provided \$1 million for research on the ash effects of Mt. St. Helens.
- . Provided \$ 1 million for program evaluations.
- . Deleted \$4.9 million in savings resulting from the hiring freeze.
- . Restored \$1,075,000 for wool and mohair; \$1,048,000 for tobacco research; \$1,779,000 for research on industrial uses of farm products.

- CR . Increased formula programs by \$12.3 million: \$10.049 million for Hatch; \$.774 million for McIntire Stennis; \$1.485 million for 1890's and Tuskegee.
- . Funded Animal Health and Disease program authorized under section 1433 of the Farm Bill at \$6.5 million level.
- . Funded Competitive Research Grants program at the \$16 million level.
- . Special Research Grants funds (P.L. 89-106) were approved at the \$17,076 million level. Programs funded include \$1 million for Antidessertification, \$5.050 million for Animal Health, \$.5 million for Aquaculture, \$.5 million for Germplasm, \$.850 million for ash effects of Mt. St. Helens, \$1.5 for IPM, other important Special Research Grants.

- EXT . Increased formula programs by \$16.9 million: \$16.117 million for Smith-Lever 3b & c which includes \$2.5 million for rural development; \$.797 for 1890's and Tuskegee.
- . Provided additional program support for IPM (\$1 million)
- . Provided funds for Urban Gardening (\$3 million) and Farm Safety (\$1.020 million).
- Reduced Federal Administration funds by \$.595 million.
- TIS . Increased funds by \$.556 million (basically for increased operating costs and farm business and specialized systems).
- HN . Provided additional program support for Tufts (\$1.7 million) Baylor (\$.3 million); LAIR (\$1 million); Food Choices (\$.200 million).
- . Reduced base funds for Consumer Nutrition Institute by \$.500 million.
- HE . Provided Bankhead-Jones funds (\$11.5 million).



ANSON R. BERTRAND
Director
Science and Education

U.S.D.A.
NAT'L AGRIC LIBRARY
RECEIVED

FEB 13

PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS